

TESTIMONY OF MARY CROSBY
BEFORE THE LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
RE: HB No. 63 (RAISED) AN ACT MANDATING EMPLOYERS
PROVIDE PAID SICK LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES

Good afternoon Chairman Prague, Chairman Ryan and distinguished members of the Labor Committee.

My name is Mary Crosby. I am a resident of Guilford and a school nurse at Adams Middle School in Guilford.

I am also president of AFSCME Local 1303-314, representing school nurses in the Town of Guilford.

I wish to express my support of House Bill Number 63, An Act Mandating Employers Provide Paid Sick Leave to Employees.

As a school nurse, I deal with sick students every day.

I know the impact it causes to children's' health and to their ability to learn when they get sent to school sick – often because their parents were unable to stay home with the child and lose a day's pay.

Some of you may remember when Guilford High School was forced to close for two days when many students were sickened by the H1N1 virus. If you ever visited my office at Adams Middle School, you'd see non-stop activity. We are treating more students with flu- and flu-like symptoms than ever before.

All of you know how quickly a cold or flu can churn through a classroom. So when children end up at school sick because they're parents couldn't keep them home, it has a negative affect on the whole classroom.

As long as there are kids, there will be germs – but allowing working people to take a day off to take care of their families when they are sick will keep our kids and our schools healthier. And it will make a difference in the pocketbooks of parents struggling with the recession.

As a school nurse, I can tell you firsthand that we are often the first line of defense in our country's fractured health care system. Employees without paid sick days are far more likely to lack a usual source for routine and preventive healthcare for themselves and their families. So they rely on school nurses to take care of their kids.

I am proud of my work. I love my job and I love the children. But I think our society, and certainly our school system, will be healthier and more productive if House Bill 63 becomes law.

Thank you very much.